

LISTING OF CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A format for optical testing of a sample comprising:

a first format member comprising a first inner surface and a platform extending a distance from said inner surface; and

a second format member comprising a second inner surface and a well disposed within said second inner surface, said well being shaped to accept said platform of said first format member within said well;

a sample fill nose disposed within said second format member and extending from a sample collection opening at a first end of said sample fill nose to intersect with said well at a second end of said sample fill nose; and

a vent disposed within said second format member and extending along said second inner surface from a vent opening at a first end of said vent to intersect with said well at a second end of said vent,
wherein said sample fill nose has a sample fill nose cross-section and said vent has a vent cross-section different from said sample fill nose cross-section.

2-3. (Cancelled).

4. (Currently Amended) The format of claim 3 1 wherein said vent intersects with said well at an area approximately opposing an intersection of said sample fill nose with said well.

5. (Original) The format of claim 1 wherein said platform extends from said first inner surface to a platform height and wherein said well extends within said second format member to a well depth greater than said platform height, thereby forming a sample testing region for accepting said sample.

6. (Original) The format of claim 1 wherein said platform is provided with a reagent thereon for reacting with said sample.

7. (Original) The format of claim 5 wherein said sample testing region has a sample testing region volume and further comprising a fill nose disposed within said second format member and extending from a sample collection opening at a first end to said sample testing region at a second end, said fill nose having a fill nose volume greater than said sample testing region volume, thereby ensuring that sufficient sample volume is available to fill the sample testing region.

8. (Currently Amended) A format for optical testing of a sample comprising:

a first format member comprising a first inner surface and a platform extending to a platform height from said inner surface; ~~and~~

a second format member comprising a second inner surface and a well disposed within said second inner surface and extending a well depth below said second inner surface, said well being shaped to accept said platform of said first format member within said well thereby forming a sample testing region;

a sample fill nose extending from a sample collection opening at a first end of said sample fill nose to said well at a second end of said sample fill nose; and

a vent extending from a vent opening at a first end of said vent to said well at a second end of said vent,

wherein said sample fill nose has a sample fill nose cross-section and said vent has a vent cross-section different from said sample fill nose cross-section.

9. (Original) The format of claim 8 wherein said platform is cylindrical and has a platform diameter and said well is cylindrical and has a well diameter greater than said platform diameter.

10. (Original) The format of claim 8 wherein said sample fill nose is adapted to transport a volume of said sample from said sample collection opening to said sample testing region via capillary action.

11. (Currently Amended) The format of claim 9 10 wherein said volume of said sample is approximately 50 nl.

12. (Currently Amended) The format of claim 9 10 wherein said volume of said sample is within the range of from approximately 5 nl to approximately 1000 nl.

13. (Original) The format of claim 9 wherein said vent opening is provided on an opposite side of said format from said sample collection opening.

14. (Cancelled).

15. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a format for optical testing, the method comprising the acts of:

providing a first format member comprising a first inner surface and a platform extending to a platform height above said first inner surface;

providing a second format member comprising:

a) a second inner surface and a well disposed within said second inner surface and extending to a well depth below said second inner surface, said well depth being greater than said platform height;

b) a sample fill nose notch having a first width, said sample fill nose notch terminating at said well; and

c) a vent notch having a second width different than said first width, said vent notch terminating at said well; and

joining said first format member to said second format member by inserting said platform of said first format member into said well of said second format member, thereby forming a sample testing region.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15 further comprising applying a testing reagent to said platform.

17. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein said sample fill nose notch approximately opposes said vent notch across said well.

18. (Original) The method of claim 15 further comprising providing adhesive on one or both of said first and second format members.

19. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein said vent notch has a rectangular cross-section.

20. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein said fill nose notch has a rectangular cross-section.

21. (New) A format for optical testing of a sample comprising:
a first format member comprising a first inner surface and a platform extending a distance from said inner surface, said platform further extending in a direction substantially perpendicular to said inner surface; and
a second format member comprising a second inner surface and a well disposed within said second inner surface, said well being shaped to accept said platform of said first format member within said well.

22. (New) The format of claim 1 wherein said vent cross-section has a first area and said sample fill nose cross-section has a second area, said first area is greater than said second area.

23. (New) The format of claim 10 wherein said vent cross-section has a first area and said sample fill nose cross-section has a second area, said first area is greater than said second area.

24. (New) The method of claim 15 wherein said first width is greater than said second width.

25. (New) The format of claim 1 wherein said platform extends in a direction substantially perpendicular to said inner surface.